

Community Facilities Committee – Library Expansion

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, September 9, 2012 , 6:30 PM Community Room, Milford Police Station

Present: **Committee Members:** Malia Ohlson, Meghan Lydon, Ann Mione, Conrad Koch, Gil Archambault, Joe O’Neil, Merv Newton; Mary Burdett, Chair of the Library Trustees; Michelle Sampson, Library Director; Bill Parker, Community Development Director

Prior to the start of the meeting Committee members introduced themselves to each other. Bill Parker mentioned that there were three additional members who will join the Committee: Rod Watkins, Peg Seward, and Scott Cornett, all whom had other commitments this evening.

At 6:40 PM B. Parker began the meeting by welcoming everyone on the newest Community Facilities Committee undertaking, the Library expansion. Parker explained that the CFC had previously worked on the new Police Station, a combined Fire/Ambulance facility, and most recently the new Ambulance facility approved in March. A CFC charge was approved for the Library expansion by the Selectmen, and Parker thanked the group for participating on this project.

M. Sampson then provided an overview of the project, noting that since 1999 the Trustees and previous Library Director had seen to it that the expansion project was placed in the Town’s capital improvements plan (CIP) and since 2006 the Trustees have been gathering information, conducting surveys, analyzing space needs, working with architects, and developing more concrete plans and cost estimates. M. Sampson passed out several documents reflecting Library history, strategic plan, survey results, and background on the importance of a Library in a community. Now it was time for the Trustees to seek fresh eyes to review all the background to develop a realistic proposal to place on the 2015 warrant, as recommended in the CIP. As noted by M. Sampson, Library usage continues to increase at significant rates and the Library continues to serve many needs for the community, with more services that contemplated with the 1986 expansion. The Library, using national statistics, can provide a return on investment of 4:1, and serves as a hub and destination for downtown activity, and is one of the busiest libraries in the State, per capita.

M. Sampson noted that two properties had been acquired for potential expansion. Additionally, the Trustees had worked with several architects and a professional library space planner, Patience Jackson. The Trustees and Director had visited libraries in Hudson, Portsmouth, Laconia, Keene, Windham, Wilton, New Boston, and Goffstown, as well as Groton and Fitchburg, MA; and had spoken with directors on specific situations and challenges. All work accomplished thus far by the Trustees has been paid for by Trustee funds and Library impact fees.

M. Sampson and M. Burdett noted that over the course of the past several years the Library has upgraded carpeting, furnishings, interior space, and performed numerous maintenance repairs and upgrades. M. Burdett noted that the key concept for the Trustees is to look at flexibility and adaptability in Library services as the Library must keep up with changing needs and technology.

There was a follow-up discussion relative to alternatives to an expansion, traffic and parking issues, and function of the Library in the community.

B. Parker asked that the Committee review all the documents provided this evening, and if it thought a tour would be a logical next step. The group concurred, and the Committee agreed to Monday night, October 1, 2012 at 6:30 PM for a tour of the facility and a look at plans and elevations that have been developed to date. Also at that meeting the Committee will further discuss best time and place to continue regular meetings.